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Culture and Social Revolution

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Retrieved on 10th December 2021 from anarkismo.net

A discussion of the relevance of culture work in developing the social revolution. A theoretical framework that challenges nationalism, religion, and other forms of the state with an Anarchist Communist perspective.

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Imagine, if you will, an onion, connected and interconnected circles raveled around a core. Each layer is distinct, separate, yet all a part of the whole. This dialectical representation of what the Ancient Egyptians considered to be a representation of life itself is a perfect example of the current transition period to Communism. The outside core is culture, embedded within, created from, yet distinct from society. The social layer is distinct and yet a malfeasant creation in servitude to the laws of capital, the state, and all oppression needed to maintain the exploitative rule of the capitalist class. The core, tertiary, and most fundamental contradiction that can only be resolved after the onion has been peeled, is the natural environment and Man's harmonious adaptation to it.

The form of revolution is based upon the content of its specific internal contradictions. The primary contradiction of social revolution is the conflict of the oppressed class struggling against the vampirical exploitative oppressor. We must under-

stand that today's "have nots" are tomorrow's "gon'-gets"¹ Revolution is uneven, violent, and an organic process that is difficult to fully grasp and understand. Revolution is anathema to all forms of class society. Revolution is evolution, violent, struggle, a series of negations² as the simple organisms move and struggle to survive, adapt, and eventually overcome the existing environmental external contradictions that inhibited earlier development. As an organism struggles to survive, and adapt, that organism moves to a higher understanding of both itself, and its environment. The more complex the organism, the more aware of its own existence and the existence of others it is.

Peter Kropotkin illustrated that, in direct contradiction to the bourgeois apologist Hobbes³, Darwin's theory of natural selection was too skewed towards individual competition. Mutual aid is the primary factor of evolution. The dialectical exchange between each organism and its own and opposites is the foundation for all societies, animal, and human. Engel's illustrated how the human hand created the human mind through tools, work, and society.⁴ As the human hand created the tools for work, the mind adapted to the potentials opened up through each actualization, and dexterity of both mind and hand created the unbridled potential of modern man. Piaget clearly illustrated the social creature that man is in his studies

¹ The Coup advances this in their song "We Are The Ones", as they go on to say that we'll tear down your state." The use of hip hop as a revolutionary weapon by groups such as this illustrates the potential of revolutionary music.

² A Negation is "addition by subtraction." By the negating of one aspect, a further growth can occur. A negation of a thing is not necessarily a negative thing, nor is it always positive, but it always causes a change to occur.

³ See Brian Morris' Kropotkin: The Politics of Community for a polemic against Hobbes using Kropotkin's analysis found in Mutual Aid.

⁴ "The Part played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man" Frederick Engels 1876

and particular to geographical locations will arise. But, we really can't know what they will be at this stage of history. We must constantly remind ourselves that communism will be the beginning of history.

As the social revolution leads to the communist revolution, we will then see the environmental revolution unleashed. The Earth's infinite¹¹ resources will be tapped as we organize ourselves off of the industrial fossil fuels and move towards geothermic, wave, or wind energy. The more we fight to harmonize ourselves with nature and discover our true humanity, the more of an egalitarian society we will build. We should build environmental awareness and theorize how to best implement environmentally friendly, yet agriculturally conducive energy systems that will meet the needs of the working class. Each empty factory seized is a potential windmill factory, but at this stage of the social revolution, our aspirations to a pure environment must be fought for through a long continuous struggle.

The stages of the social revolution can be built, must be fought for, now. We must join churches in our areas to build clothing swaps, soup kitchens, and raise the awareness of the congregations. We must enlist in the armed services to create the spirit of revolt and insurrections among the armed wing of the capitalist class. We should try to buy old camp sites and build collective farms to supply the urban working class with fresh food. We should attempt to turn every abandoned lot into a community garden and cultural center. But, most importantly, we must live, breath, and dedicate ourselves into being the people we want others to be in a communist society. Let others see us, hear us, and let us foment the spirit of revolt so that the social revolution destroys the state, capital, and privilege once and for all.

¹¹ Infinite relative to the finite limits of existence. For example, solar energy can only exist so long as there is an Earth and a sun.

and financed by the capitalists and that serve the interests of capital permeate the mental landscape of the proletariat. The conflict between what is innate and inherent of humanity must be discovered in conflict with what we know is not a part of us. The “black conscious” and the spirit of other oppressed peoples have a natural affinity of struggle, solidarity, and egalitarian sacrifice. As the exploited toiling masses seek to find their commonality in struggle, whatever cultural differences that arise, will be natural. We cannot know what these cultural differences are now, as the culture of the oppressor shackles the mind of the oppressed. A dialectic, lucid, conscious, and rational worldview based on the organic interplay of ideas and mutual respect will lay the foundation of a communist worldview.

Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. hold out pie in the sky rhetoric to keep billions of our fellow wage slaves suffering through their lives on Earth. The priest of all hues and persuasions, is the employee of the state. The preacher-man charlatans teach our fellow wage slaves to follow a messiah, and to make the rich man richer so that the offering plate stays full. The Dalai Lama implied support for the USA’s imperialist genocide in Iraq¹⁰ and Pope Benedictine XVI was an actual member of the Nazi party. All culture in the world today has been created under the auspices of the state and so are poisoned by capitalism. The unity of the working masses comes from our strength to persevere, our desire for equality, and our innate understanding that we should all be struggling to share the Earth’s resources. As we unite through struggle, the working class will coalesce. As we tear down the artificial social constructs of country, nation, and religion, the indigenous peculiarities associated with certain parts of humanity

¹⁰ “Dali Lama: Iraq War May Be Justified” by SCOTT LINDLAW Monday, Sep. 15, 2003 WASHINGTON (AP) — The Dalai Lama said Wednesday that the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan may have been justified to win a larger peace, but that is it too soon to judge whether the Iraq war was warranted.

on the stages of human development. A quick examination of each stage of human development shows the negations necessary to achieve adulthood, mature cognition, requires positive and healthy social interaction. “Conversations with others strengthens internal dialogue⁵.” Art and culture arise from the abstract understandings of concrete reality, the interaction of humanity struggling to make meaning with the external world.

Anarchism exists naturally within the heart and souls of the working class: communism is the logical extrapolation from it⁶. Today’s movement has inherited a century and half’s worth of anarchist struggle. Anarchy is the chaos and raw unbridled potential within the working class; it is the struggle against selfish order that is oppressive, and it must eventually lead to an organism of some sort. Individual cells must eventually come together to form an organism, or they will be the basic food source for every animal, like the helpless Plankton that float in the ocean in an anarchic utopia of sunlit splendor. They are constantly being devoured by any and all who come into contact with them.

The greatest setback the anarchist movement faced was their inept smashing during the Bolshevik revolution. The authoritarian principles of scientific socialism won out over the passionate ideologues of anarchism. An organized entity with a plan, a vision, and the initiative necessary to carry it out will always destroy a lack of organization. The anarchists and socialists both wanted communism⁷, but the socialists wanted to

⁵ Dialectical Materialism: In Laws, Categories, and Practice by Ira Gollobin has an in depth discussion of Piaget and his stages of development. Gollobin directly correlates Piaget’s research to the stages of humanity, and, by so doing, illustrates the potential world that we can create.

⁶ “The ABC of The Revolutionary Anarchist” by Nestor Makhno

⁷ Communism is a stateless society based upon the principle of “from each according to ability and to each according to need.” It is the end state goal of libertarian communism, anarchy, and socialism.

take authoritarian shortcuts to get there. There are no shortcuts during the social revolution. None. All shortcuts will lead to capitalism in a more powerful virulent form than before the revolution.

Without belaboring the point and spending countless pages extolling the organization while clearly illustrating the failures of both socialism and naked anti-authoritarianism, suffice it to say that anarchy, unbridled potential, resistance to oppressive order, exists within the working class, but only an organization of dedicated revolutionaries can create the necessary conditions for, provide leadership to, and then facilitate self-governance of the working class within the framework of a communist society. Only organization can deliver the working class through the “Red Sea” of social revolution. Though the Pharaonic forces of the bourgeoisie may attack us and hound us, the imperialist swine and their fascist dogs will die. The major key for us as revolutionaries to realize is that we don’t need, nor should we ever aspire to be, a Moses. We must struggle against any and all attempts at creating a cult of personality. The cult of personality is always used as a lightning rod to mysticize the working class and obscure class rule. You cannot have a state without having a “great leader.” It is a sad testament to our working class revolutionary heritage that our prior leaders, soldiers, and fighters retreated from this principle. Great leaders will emerge through the fires of class struggle, but they must be the product of revolution, and their authority will pass with the revolution, not to become idols that assume leadership and are absolutely followed by the masses that sacrificed so much.

Social revolution must come from below, and it must be led by the working class in their own interests. For the working class to lead itself to emancipation and an end to class rule, a mass party of millions of dedicated revolutionaries must facilitate and coordinate the great task of social revolution. We must keep in mind that grass grows from the roots up, and

communist world will germinate. Our new world will be born of a conscious and rational movement for the international working class to have full self-determination, self-development, and self-expression. Where the individual development of all will never be allowed to impinge on the individual freedom of any.

As a communist world becomes more tangible to the toiling masses, they will desire to create the necessary conditions to build that new world. We must continually be organizing a collective approach among the toiling masses. We must never make the historically anarchist mistake of just letting things happen on their own, nor should we make the authoritarian mistake of doing things for the workers because we have their interests at heart and really know what’s best for them. We have to be in the struggle and be organic with how the organization will happen. At the same time, we must not hesitate to build our revolutionary organization through organizing branches or affinity groups. Wherever communist culture begins to blossom organizing should also be growing. Our primary measurement during the cultural work/consciousness raising period of the social revolution must be the growth of revolutionary organization. If we are not growing, then we are not being revolutionary, are not leading enough, and are heading in the wrong direction. If we are growing as the revolutionary aspirations of the working class grow, then we are correct in our work and analysis.

The art that we create will be a reflection of the struggles to collectivize, organize, and rise up against the capitalist class. But, there are many anarchist groups, libertarian communist groups, and especially socialist groups, that say that culture work should not happen since it violates the indigenous culture of an area. This is an absolutist and reductionist way of understanding culture. The entire human population possesses a culture saturated with superstition, slavery, elitism, privilege, and especially religion. Artificial social constructs maintained

our experiences and the workers experiences must be written down, filmed, photographed, and journalized. Paintings of the struggles we are in, poems celebrating the sacrifices that are made, and songs showing the beauty of class struggle will lead to a further solidarity within the working class and their revolutionary center.

Our culture work must go beyond mere propaganda agitation to a full all out assault on the sexist, racist, and nationalist garbage pushed by the capitalists. Billboards and subway posters should be a constant target of markers, spray cans, and bumper stickers. This culture of revolt will have its roots in the revulsion of the minstrel show racist garbage coming out of Hollywood today. Music can be laid down in computer home studios and distributed widely through our networks and the internet. Rage Against The Machine, despite their internal contradictions, did raise the consciousness of many fans who tuned into their rage drenched lyrics. Artists are culture workers, and they are very valuable to the bourgeoisie. The international ruling class makes trillions of dollars a year through its culture industry belching out bland pop ditties that reinforce the social status quo. Revolutionary art and culture must attack the very foundation of capital – patriarchy, privilege, power, domination, and violence.

A quantity of cultural actions will qualitatively affect the social aspect of revolution. Each quantity of cultural work will qualitatively advance the social by building the conscious of the proletariat, and inspire them to revolt. The spirit of revolt can then be further fomented by culture centers, community gardens, collective farms, and especially, revolutionary libraries. Our culture work will both fund and facilitate the cultural centers and Ferrer's modern schools where the com-

an overwhelming majority) they reach the consciousness of their own power and exercise this power in their daily lives, in a way consciously adopting the ideas of anarchism.

from a seed. A tiny embryo planted in soil causes weeds to crack concrete. The anarchy that exists within the working class is dormant until provoked, though there are some revolutionaries, and more every day, who are aware that the system of capitalism has to be smashed. It needs to be cultivated and facilitated into a hunger for a communist world that is dedicated to meeting our needs. The dialectic between anarchism and communism must be maintained.

The social revolution is the transition period between capitalism and communism. We are in the social revolution period now. The Bolsheviks made a great mistake and retreat from revolution when they theorized that the transition period comes after a violent revolution for state power. The anarchist movement correctly declared that the proletariat shouldn't aspire to state power, but should instead smash the power of the state. But, the major anarchist principle that seems to be forgotten in this argument of transition period is that of "anarchy now!" – building anarchy wherever and whenever you can.

The revolutionary has seized control of his own mind and must continually struggle against the internalized state and social constructs that she/he's been indoctrinated with under the oppression of capitalist culture. By becoming a revolutionary dedicated to the absolute destruction of class rule and the monolithic state that supports it, while absolutely dedicated to creating an egalitarian society of all for all and in the interests of all, then you have "state power." The individual determination necessary for the creation of a "stateless" society is predicated upon the initiative and desire to meet the needs all of those who are in need. The contemporary revolutionary is akin to the medieval atheist who laughed at the priests when they threatened hell, and shook the foundations of the church to its knees, for we deny capital, the god of the modern state, as the prime motivator of human existence.

We seize power within ourselves in order to facilitate others seizing their own power. We don't want power to force oth-

ers to serve our own interests, but to empower all to create the necessary framework to meet all of our interests. We must recognize that revolution is a series of negations, rebirths through deaths. Each negation of a stage leads to a higher stage of development and understanding.

The appearance of today's globalized world may lead some to wonder how a social revolution can take place. The capitalists have bombs, tanks, and computers to coordinate their planes and bombs. How can a revolutionary movement create a social revolution within these existing social conditions? Some authoritarian socialist groups adhere to the "vanguard party" concept of building a party, dropping some agitation, and eventually seizing power to put themselves in charge because they are smarter than Mao, Lenin, and Stalin put together, and the entire anarchist movement didn't exist. They know more than everyone, and if you've ever talked to them or more realistically, been talked at by them, then you realize that their concept of dictatorship of the proletariat is a couple of proletarian dictators.

As far as the Maoist people's war for New Democracy (basically the same old bourgeois democracy with new promises), any religious "foco" guerilla organizations that exist such as Hamas, or the "left" governments of social democracy, will either bring about bourgeois democracy or a theocracy that will deepen the power of the state, further entrench the laws of capital within the minds of the people, build cynicism, and maintain class rule. All struggles for national sovereignty are doomed to maintain the capitalist state. "Self-determination" for a "people" is a euphemism for a nation. A country is a distinct sphere of influence of one section of a minority class exploiting the mass section of toilers while creating a buffer class of intellectuals and apologists who tell the toilers that they should be happy because they have Vietnamese or Palestinians whipping their asses instead of Imperialist Americans or Fascist Israelis. National self-determination is nothing more than bourgeois as-

pirations and outright manipulation of the working class into creating a bourgeois revolution that is against the interests of the toiling masses. The national question has been answered time and time again through millions of corpses and smashed dreams. All forms of nationalism are a death trap for the revolutionary movement.

This brings us to the first stage of the social revolution – where the revolutionary legions of the Chinese revolution left off. After a revolution that leads to an authoritarian form of government, the most advanced sections of the revolutionary proletariat will rise up to advance the revolution to its original egalitarian goals, we see this repeated with Kronstadt's sailors, the Friends of Durruti, and the left elements of the Red Guard during The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. At the nexus of revolution, the Chinese proletariat saw that culture hid the capitalist reconstruction being buried in red flags and Mao Zedong rhetoric. Culture was saturated within the left movement of Allende's Chile in South America. Culture is ideology in practice, and culture creates consciousness.

The stages of revolution are all interconnected, for as the culture of revolution is created, it will embolden the toiling masses to reconsider the society in which they live. The revolutionary culture must come from the interaction of a living breathing toiling class struggling valiantly to free itself from its oppressor. As the revolutionary seeks to "build a base within the working class"⁸ through "social insertion"⁹

⁸ "Build a Base in the Working Class" Progressive Labor Party document 1968 Class consciousness has nothing to do with how well you can vocalize Marxist-Leninist propositions. It has everything to do with your relations to people, and how they can eventually be moved into battle against the class enemy.

⁹ "Especificismo: The Anarchist Praxis of Building Popular Movements and Revolutionary Organizations in South America" NEFAC document 2006 This assumes the perspective that social movements will reach their own logic of creating revolution, not when they as a whole necessarily reach the point of being self-identified "anarchists," but when as a whole (or at least